

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1935
AMEMBASSY PARIS NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY DACCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 5543

CINCPAC FOR POLAD
PARIS FOR THE SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, US, PFOR
SUBJ: BURKI ARTICLE ON VANCE-AZIZ AHMED MEETING

1. THE MAY 29 PAKISTAN TIMES CARRIES AN ARTICLE BY H.K. BURKI, ENTITLED "DIALOGUE IN PARIS" WHICH REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE PAKISTAN PRESS THE SCHEDULED BIALTERAL TALKS BETWEEN AZIZ AHMED AND SECRETARY VANCE. THE ARTICLE, LACKING THE USUAL STRIDENCY OF BURKI PIECE, IS SEEN HERE AS HAVING ALMOST CERTAINLY BEEN INSPIRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND COULD SERVE AS A SIGN OF HOW HE SEES THE TALKS UNFOLDING.

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2. THE ARTICLE SAYS THAT THE MEETING WILL GIVE PAKISTAN THE OPPORTUNITY TO AIR ITS GRIEVANCES. THE INITIATIVE FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS, SAYS BURKI, "RESTS PRIMARILY WITH SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE." IT IS DOUBTFUL, HE SAYS, WHETHER THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES CAN BE CLEARED UP AT ONE MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS BUT NEVERTHELESS THIS MEETING MAY BE "A NEW BENCHMARK IN

PAKISTAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS".

3. THE IDEA THAT PAKISTAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS ARE AT A TURNING POINT IS THE PRIMARY THESIS OF THE ARTICLE. BURKI SAYS THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS HAVE SEEN PERIODS OF SHARP FLUCUATIONS OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, BEGINNING WITH INDIA'S "CHINESE ADVENTURE IN 1962" AND MARKED BY PERIODS OF "BITTER HOSTILITY". IT IS TOO EARLY, HE CONTINUES, TO KNOW WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S ATTITUDES TOWARD PAKISTAN WILL BE BUT CARTER'S STATEMENTS DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND THE FIRST DAYS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION SUGGEST "A SCENARIO THAT NO PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT WORTH THE NAME COULD AFFORD TO ACCEPT". CONTINUING THE REVIEW OF PAST US/PAKISTAN RELATIONS, THE ARTICLE SAYS THAT THE MILITARY ALLIANCE "HAS BEEN SO INEFFECTIVE AS TO BE VIRTUALLY DEAD" SINCE THE ARMS EMBARGO STARTED IN 1965. EVEN NOW, AFTER THE EMBARGO HAS BEEN LIFTED, IT IS STILL IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GOP TO BUY THE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY WHICH IT FEELS IS REQUIRED. THE UNITED STATES, WHICH GREW ACCUSTOMED TO TREATING PAKISTAN AS A "VIRTUAL CLIENT STATE" HAS BEEN SO FAR UNABLE TO ACCEPT BHUTTO'S "PRINCIPLED POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP".

4. PERHAPS THE TIME HAS COME, THE ARTICLE SAYS, FOR THE GOP TO RENOUNCE ALL OF THE MANY "ONE-SIDED" STRUCTURES AND LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES "WHOSE EXISTENCE HAD ALMOST SUCCEEDED IN DESTROYING PAKISTAN". THE ARTICLE SUGGESTS THAT FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MAY ONLY BE POSSIBLE IF THEY MAINTAIN "A CERTAIN DISTANCE SO THAT NEITHER SIDE MAKES ANY UNUSUAL DEMANDS". THE BHUTTO GOVERN-

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MENT, THE FIRST GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN TO "SEEK AND PRESERVE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES ON THE BASIS OF WELL RECOGNIZED PRINCIPLES", HAS MADE ITS POSITION KNOWN FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS. IT IS NOW UP TO THE UNITED STATES TO CLARIFY ITS STANCE. ONLY BY MOVING APART, BURKI CONCLUDES, WILL THE WAY BE CLEAR "FOR ESTABLISHING A TRULY NORMAL, HEALTHY AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP IN A PRAGMATIC FRAMEWORK".

5. BURKI HAS IN THE PAST BEEN USED BY THE GOP TO FLOAT TRIAL BALLOONS AND IN THE PRESENT PERIOD IT HAS BEEN APPARENT HE IS ANSERABLE ONLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO CONCLUDE THAT HE IS ONCE AGAIN BEING USED IN THIS ROLE. IF SO, THEN THE ARTICLE IS A FURTHER INDICATION THAT THE GOP STILL INTENDS TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE IN THE UPCOMING BILATERAL. ALTHOUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTER MAY TAKE A CONCILIATORY APPROACH DURING THE MEETING, BHUTTO MAY PERSIST IN SEEING PAKISTAN AS THE AGGRIEVED PARY AND NOT STANDDOWN FROM HIS CLAIMS THAT THE US WAS INTERFERING IN PAKISTAN'S

INTERNAL AFFAIRS. SUCH A STANCE WOULD ENABLE HIM TO CONTINUE
TO USE THE ANTI-AMERICAN THEME IN A REFERENDUM OR IN A NEW
ELECTION CAMPAIGN SHOULD CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE
OPPOSITION YIELD THAT RESULT. THE ARTICLE IS ALSO REFLECTIVE
OF A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT CURRENT IN THE GOP THAT THE TIME
FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN US/PAKISTAN RELATIONS HAS ARRIVED.
BHUTTO NO DOUBT SEES SOME APPEAL FOR THE LEFT WING OF HIS
PARTY IN ALLUSIONS TO SUCH A NEW DIRECTION. THE DEGREE
TO WHICH THIS WILL AFFECT THE MEETING IN PARIS AND THE
FUTURE COURSE OF PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY IS STILL UNKNOWN.
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